



California State Parks

Quick Facts



Last updated 1/23/2007

The Future of California State Parks

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

The Department actively tracks trends in outdoor recreation and leisure travel, both on a national and a statewide basis, and conducts periodic user surveys to determine the needs and interests of park visitors. The *Public Opinions and Attitudes on*

Outdoor Recreation in California survey indicated that the following recreation opportunities were important to the public:

- Camping in developed sites
- Trail hiking
- Nature study
- Visiting museums or historic sites
- Recreational walking
- Visiting zoos or arboreturns
- Picnicking in developed sites
- Use of open grass or turf areas
- Camping in primitive sites

This information helps direct the future of California State Parks.

Parks' Connection to Tourism

California State Parks provide a valuable and vital resource to both U.S. residents and travelers from other countries. According to the California Division of Tourism, 73 percent of travel by U.S. residents in California was for leisure purposes (2005). These travelers

enjoyed the wide variety of leisure activities available in California, many of which can be found in California State Parks. Park-related activities and the numbers of leisure travelers who reported participating in them are as follows:

Activity	California Resident Leisure Travelers (Millions of person-trips)	Non-California Resident Leisure Travelers (Millions of person-trips)
Sightseeing	45.4	12.6
Beach/waterfront	20.6	5.7
Parks: National, State, etc.	12.4	3.4
Visit Historic Site	8.2	2.3
Hike, Bike, etc.	10.3	1.1
Camping	6.2	0.8
Nature/Culture: Observe & Conserve; Eco-travel (Bird/Wildlife Watching)	6.2	1.9
Hunt, Fish, etc.	4.1	0.7
Boat/Sail	2.1	0.4



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Overseas travelers also participate in park-related activities and are an

important part of the California State Parks' visitor base.

Activity	Percentage of Overseas Travelers (2005)
Visit Historical Places	41%
Visit National Parks	33%
Touring Countryside	30%
Water Sports/Sunbathing	18%
Camping/Hiking	7%
Environ./Eco. Excursions	5%

Travel Dollars and State Parks

On the average, each California county earns approximately \$1.5 billion per year in direct travel expenditures by visitors (2006). While it is not possible to tie all of these funds to specific drawing points in each county, it is a fact that California State Parks are vital to the economies of many communities. For example, a study by California

Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo found that visitors to Morro Bay State Park added \$15 million to the local economy in direct and indirect expenditures over two years. The visitors' expenditures were responsible for 364 jobs in Morro Bay, primarily in recreation and amusement, hotels, restaurants, and retail shops.

Transportation Modes

The majority of leisure travelers in California use private vehicles for their trips. This is good news for California State Parks. The average distance traveled one-way by California residents on leisure trips is 169 miles, bringing many state park units within driving

distance of urban centers. Also important to note is that 58% of leisure travel by California residents is for day trips, and 19% is for getaway weekends. California State Parks are convenient destinations for California residents for all types of leisure travel.

Transportation Usage by Leisure Travelers in California

Point of Origin	Auto (net)*	RV
U.S. Residents	57%	1%
CA Residents	89%	2%
Total Overseas	69%	1%
United Kingdom	62%	1%
Japan	70%	0.4%
Mexico (air travelers)	68%	N/A
Australia/New Zealand	66%	2%

* Includes rented and private cars, trucks and small vans